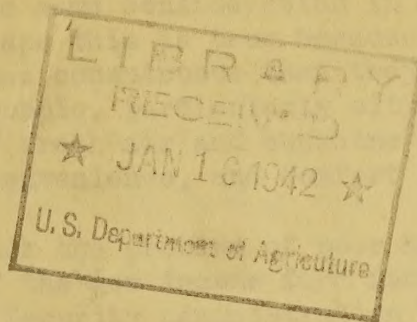


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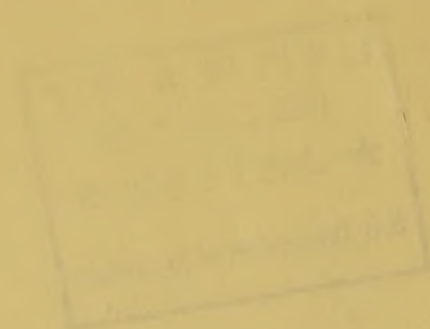


RURAL HOUSING FACILITIES OF SELECTED
FARM SECURITY ADMINISTRATION BORROWERS
IN
NORTH DAKOTA, SOUTH DAKOTA, NEBRASKA, AND KANSAS

1940

Information gathered by Farm Security Administration Home Management Supervisors of Region VII and compiled by Conie C. Foote, Chief Management Section, Farm Security Administration, and Dona Leader, Division Farm Population & Rural Welfare, Bureau of Agricultural Economics.

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RURAL HOUSING FACILITIES OF SELECTED
FARM SECURITY ADMINISTRATION DISTRICTS
IN
NORTH DAKOTA, SOUTH DAKOTA, NEBRASKA, AND KANSAS

Information gathered by Farm Security Administration Home Management
Supervisors of Region VII and compiled by Conita C. Foster, Home
Management Section, Farm Security Administration, and Donald
Leader, Division Farm Population & Rural Welfare, Bureau
of Economics.

FOREWORD

Housing, as a factor in the health and welfare of the family, has not been given the same consideration in rural areas as in urban areas. Perhaps this is true because slum conditions in the country are less conspicuous than they are in the city and because so many people, particularly city people, seem to think that "plenty of fresh air and sunshine" make up to rural families for space, convenience, and comfort in their houses.

In an attempt to attack the problem of poor health, insecurity, and discouragement of the low income farm families coming for assistance, the Farm Security Administration cannot overlook the importance of housing. "A man is a product of his environment" and to change a man's environment often changes the man.

A report of the rural housing conditions of selected Farm Security Administration clients in Region VII reveals that poor housing is one of the big problems of the area. A large number of families have been helped to have better houses through the Resettlement and Tenant Purchase phases of the FSA program. This number is small, however, in relation to the large number of farm families living in crowded, poorly constructed, badly repaired farm houses.

This report of housing facilities should be a challenge to other agencies interested in rural welfare as well as to the Farm Security Administration.



Cal A. Ward
Regional Director
Farm Security Administration

B. E. S. JAN 23 1942

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RURAL HOUSING FACILITIES OF SELECTED
FARM SECURITY ADMINISTRATION BORROWERS

IN
NORTH DAKOTA, SOUTH DAKOTA, NEBRASKA, AND KANSAS^{1/}

The housing situation and needs of the borrowers in Region VII were studied in the fall and winter of 1939-40. Specific objectives of the study included (1) obtaining factual housing information for the use and guidance of farm and home supervisors of the FSA in developing the rehabilitation program with the borrowers and (2) providing data as to housing facilities as a basis for any general farm-housing program.

Schedule information was obtained for approximately 10 percent of the borrowers in the counties of Region VII. The borrowers were selected on a random-sample basis by drawing every tenth case of the alphabetical list of borrowers. The home supervisors of the FSA obtained the information needed to fill out the schedules.

Information was obtained for 1,998 farm families; 521 were in North Dakota, 264 in South Dakota, 588 in Nebraska, and 625 in Kansas.

1/ Report of a study made cooperatively by the Farm Security Administration, Region VII, and the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. Region VII of the Farm Security Administration does not include 25 counties in southwestern Kansas. Clerical assistance for tabulation of data was furnished by the Works Projects Administration through Official Project No. 165-2-81-125 and by the National Youth Administration through Official Project No. 750-81-506.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION
OF SELECTED FSA BORROWERS

The present housing and the possibilities for improving this housing require consideration of the economic and social status of the family involved. Dr. Hazel Kyrk of the University of Chicago says that housing is a durable good requiring an initial outlay considerably in excess of the annual income of the family that is to occupy it so the housing problem becomes partly a savings, investment, and credit problem.^{2/}

Size of Farm

The total acreage of the farm is a general indication of the income possibilities when classified by type of farming areas. The distribution of the farms covered in this study and the total farms as of 1935 for the four states is shown in Table 1.

The FSA borrowers were found to be consistently low in both the "Under 70 acres" and "500 acres and Over" size of farm groups, as compared with all farmers in the region in 1935. The FSA operators were generally high in the proportion having farms of 70 to 499 acres. This distribution of FSA borrowers by size of farm compared with all farm operators raised the speculation of whether the FSA borrowers tend to be just above the very small-sized farm group. It is probable that the requirements of qualifying for a FSA loan exclude the farmers who operate

^{2/} Journal of Home Economics, Vol. 32, page 535, October 1940.

Table 1. - Percentage Distribution of Farms
by Size for Selected Farm Security Administration
Borrowers in 1939 and of All Farms in 1935.

Size of Farm - Acres	SELECTED F.S.A. HOUSEHOLDS					ALL FARMS - 1935 ^{1/}				
	No.	So.	Nebr.	Kans.		No.	So.	Nebr.	Kans.	
	Total	Dak.	Dak.	Nebr.	Kans.	Total	Dak.	Dak.	Nebr.	Kans.
Total	100.	100.	100.	100.	100.	100.	100.	100.	100.	100.
Under 70	1.5	.4	.4	.7	3.7	9.6	4.4	6.0	9.3	14.2
70 - 139	10.6	2.9	1.9	7.4	23.6	11.4	2.9	5.5	13.5	17.0
140 - 179	26.1	16.8	7.8	36.5	31.2	20.9	14.9	21.6	25.7	19.9
180 - 259	15.5	12.5	7.5	19.5	17.6	13.1	6.6	11.5	16.8	14.4
260 - 379	25.1	32.9	36.5	21.3	17.4	17.8	24.1	22.3	15.2	14.5
380 - 499	10.2	15.3	25.1	6.7	3.4	10.1	17.4	12.2	6.7	8.0
500 and over	11.0	19.2	20.8	7.9	3.1	17.1	29.7	20.9	12.8	12.0
Average size of farm - acres	368	416	399	283	204					

^{1/} United States Census, 1935.

the smallest units. In turn, the comparatively low representation of FSA borrowers in the larger farm group, "500 acres and Over," might indicate that the larger operators do not require such assistance to the extent that operators do who have less than 500 acres.

It is generally considered that the total size of farm is a rough measure of the potential income of a farm unit.^{3/}

Based on size of farm as one general income measure, the estimated farm-income possibilities of the FSA borrowers would indicate that these households would have a rather low housing status and, probably more significant, would have a slight opportunity for improving their housing.

Farm Income.

Information as to total cash income of the farms indicated that in 1939 1/5 of the farms had less than \$250, over 1/2 had less than \$500, and only about 1/8 had gross cash incomes of over \$1,000.

One-third of the borrowers reported receiving all of their cash income from the farm only, nearly 1/3 reported income from labor off the farm, about 1/4 reported receiving grants only as a supplemental income, and about 1/6 had received income other than from their farm through both grants and outside labor. The total cash income from farm business averaged only \$559 and the cash income from other-than-farm averaged \$129 for the four States.

^{3/} A study now in progress by the Montana Agricultural Experiment Station and the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, cooperating with the Teton County Land Use Planning Committee, of farms of subminimum size in Teton County, Mont., indicates that additional factors to size of farm, in identification of minimum size, includes size of household, age of operator and supplementary income.

Table 2. - Gross Cash Income of Selected
Farm Security Administration Borrowers, 1939.

Cash Income	Percentage Distribution of Borrowers					
	Total	N. Dak.	S. Dak.	Nebr.	Kansas	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Under 250	21.0	11.0	13.0	29.2	24.4	
250 - 499	34.9	25.2	34.8	39.2	35.2	
500 - 749	20.4	26.8	25.7	16.0	17.5	
750 - 999	11.2	16.9	13.8	6.6	10.8	
1000 - 1249	5.2	6.7	4.7	4.0	6.0	
1250 - 1499	3.7	7.5	4.1	2.3	2.9	
1500 - 1749	1.5	2.4	1.3	1.1	1.6	
Over 1750	2.1	3.5	2.6	1.6	1.6	
Average Gross Cash Income - dollars	\$745.00	\$801.00	\$748.00	\$813.00	\$660.00	

The prevalence of low gross cash income resulted in generally small cash funds for family living. In 1939, about 2/5 had spent less than \$250, 2/5 spent from \$250-399, and only about 1/5 spent \$400 or over in cash for living needs. (Table 3.)

Family living of these borrowers was supported to a considerable extent by home-produced products. Three-fifths reported an estimated living furnished by the farm of less than \$250, 1/4 from \$250-399, and 1/10 had \$400 or more. (Table 4.)

Size of Household

The modal size of the households was four persons. Several households, 5 percent, had 9 or more members. (Table 5.)

Age of Operator

The operators ranged in age from the young man getting his first start in farming to a few in the "over 60 years of age" group. The modal age group was in the period of 31 to 40 years. There were no significant differences between States as to the age distribution of the operators. (Table 6.)

Table 3. - Cash Expenditures for Family
Living of Selected Farm Security Admin-
istration Borrowers - 1939.

Cash Expended for Family Living	Percentage Distribution of Borrowers					
	Total	N. Dak.	S. Dak.	Nebr.	Kansas	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Under 100	2.7	.8	2.8	2.8		3.1
100 - 149	7.1	2.0	2.2	10.0		10.2
150 - 199	11.7	3.5	6.1	15.1		15.5
200 - 249	18.8	6.3	11.8	24.1		23.2
250 - 299	15.3	9.8	13.8	18.1		15.0
300 - 349	14.7	15.3	18.3	8.2		16.5
350 - 399	11.6	16.1	14.0	9.7		8.7
Over 400	18.1	46.2	31.0	12.0		7.8
Average Cash Expenditures - dollars	\$299.00	\$382.00	\$344.00	\$267.00		\$254.00

Table 4. - Estimated Value of Living
Furnished by the Farm for Selected
Farm Security Administration Borrowers, 1939.

Estimated Value of Living Fur- nished by Farm	Percentage Distribution of Borrowers					
	Total	N. Dak.	S. Dak.	Nebr.	Kans.	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Under 100	7.5	1.8	6.3	13.1	5.7	
100 - 149	16.0	6.1	18.1	20.9	14.0	
150 - 199	20.1	5.4	19.3	22.7	24.2	
200 - 249	20.7	19.3	19.9	21.4	21.1	
250 - 299	11.5	12.7	12.7	9.1	12.3	
300 - 349	9.8	17.5	7.9	5.5	12.1	
350 - 399	4.7	10.2	4.4	2.3	4.7	
Over 400	9.7	27.1	11.4	5.0	5.9	
Average Estimated Value - dollars	\$232.00	\$326.00	\$233.00	\$197.00	\$225.00	

Table 5. - Size of Selected Farm Security
Administration Borrower Households, 1939

Number in Household	Percentage Distribution					
	Total	N. Dak.	S. Dak.	Nebr.	Kansas	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
2 persons	10.5	5.7	10.2	9.2	13.3	
3 persons	16.4	16.0	17.9	17.5	19.7	
4 persons	22.1	16.7	22.4	22.8	22.0	
5 persons	17.0	14.4	14.8	19.9	16.2	
6 persons	13.2	17.9	11.3	12.8	12.5	
7 persons	8.1	8.4	10.0	8.3	5.6	
8 persons	5.9	8.4	6.7	4.6	5.1	
9 persons or more	6.8	12.5	6.7	4.9	5.6	
Average Size of Households - Persons	4.9	5.9	4.9	4.8	4.6	

Table 6. - Age of Operators in Selected
Farm Security Administration Borrower
Households, 1939.

Age of Operator	Percentage Distribution					
	Total	N. Dak.	S. Dak.	Nebr.	Kansas	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
20 - 30 years	15.1	18.5	14.9	15.9	13.1	
31 - 40 years	34.1	34.8	33.3	36.9	32.0	
41 - 50 years	27.8	29.5	29.2	26.9	26.6	
51 - 60 years	17.1	11.0	16.4	15.9	21.3	
61 years of age and over	5.9	6.2	6.2	4.4	7.0	

Mobility of Households

The length of time the household has lived on the present farm is usually an important indication of the interest the household is likely to give to improving the present housing facilities. Short residence usually indicates little effort by the occupant to improve housing conditions. Then many tenant-farm families who have lived a comparatively long time on a farm do not have any assurance of the length of their tenure; and they cannot undertake any considerable housing improvement, for if they move they will not be able to benefit from the outlay. (Table 7.)

The average residence of these borrowers on present farms was 6.5 years for the four States, with a range of from 5.2 years in Nebraska, 6.8 in Kansas, 7.0 in South Dakota, and 7.6 years in North Dakota.

As indicated in Table 7, the FSA borrowers were some two and one-half times overrepresented in the 1-year residence on present farm, as compared with the residence status of all farm operators in 1935--21.1 percent and 8.5 percent, respectively. In turn, over one-half of all farm operators in 1935 had lived on the present farm for 10 years or more whereas in 1939 only about one-fifth of the FSA borrowers had stayed put this long.

Population turnover was also measured by means of the number of different families who had lived on each particular farmstead during the past 10 years. An average of $2\frac{1}{2}$ families had lived on these farms during the previous 10 years. (Table 8.) Shifting of residence was, therefore, characteristic of most of the selected households covered in this study.

Table 7. - Length of Residence on Farm
of Selected Farm Security Administration
Borrowers in 1939 and of Total Farm
Operators in 1935

Length of Residence	Percentage Distribution									
	F.S.A. Borrowers - 1939					Total Farm Operators - 1935 ^{1/}				
	No.	So.				No.	So.			
	Total	Dak.	Dak.	Nebr.	Kans.	Total	Dak.	Dak.	Nebr.	Kans.
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
One year	21.1	19.2	23.2	20.5	22.4	8.5	7.2	8.2	8.6	9.1
2-4 years	40.8	42.7	29.5	47.7	37.7	19.2	17.5	19.4	20.0	19.5
5-9 years	16.8	18.0	20.1	15.5	15.5	20.5	21.4	20.4	20.8	20.0
10 years and Over	21.3	20.1	27.2	16.3	24.4	51.8	53.9	52.0	50.6	51.4

^{1/} United States Census, 1935.

Table 8. - Number of Different Families
Living on Farms of Selected Farm Security
Administration Borrowers During 1930 - 1939

Number of Families Living on Farm - 1930 - 1939	Percentage Distribution					
	Total	North Dakota	South Dakota	Nebr- aska	Kansas	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
One family	24.7	24.6	33.3	19.0	26.2	
Two families	31.3	31.4	37.3	33.5	27.0	
Three families	26.0	27.9	19.4	29.2	24.1	
Four families	11.7	9.5	5.2	13.5	14.7	
Five or more families	6.3	6.6	4.8	4.8	8.0	

HOUSING SITUATION

Age of House

The age of houses within a group or area is indicative of the general needs for maintenance and repair but is not necessarily a criterion of the housing status or situation. Over half of the houses of this group were from 25 to 49 years old; about one-fifth were from 10 to 24 years old, and one-fifth were 50 years old or over. Only 1 out of every 33 was less than 10 years of age. (Table 9.)

Information by individual States indicates that about one-third of the houses of borrowers in Kansas are 50 years old or over. This was the highest proportion of old houses found in any of the States and is no doubt because Kansas has been settled longer than the other three States.

These borrowers had older houses on the average than the average farm household covered in the Farm Housing Survey of 1934. This was most marked in the case of Kansas.

The information regarding housing of borrowers was analyzed on the basis of the types-of-farming areas reported. Seven areas were covered: range livestock; spring wheat; winter wheat; transition areas and feeding; cash grain and feeding; and 2 areas in Kansas - the Flint Hills and the Ozark areas.

In general the newest houses were in the range-livestock areas, with the older ones generally in the Ozark area. More than one-half of the houses in the Ozark area were 50 years old or over, whereas only 1 out of every 25 houses in the range-livestock area was in this age group.

Table 9. - Age of Houses of Selected Farm
Security Administration Borrowers in
1939 and of Selected Farm Households in 1934.¹

Age of House	Percentage Distribution									
	Total	F.S.A. Borrowers - 1939				Selected Farm Households-1934				¹
		No.	So.	Nebr.	Kansas	No.	So.	Nebr.	Kansas	
		Dak.	Dak.	Nebr.	Kansas	Dak.	Dak.	Nebr.	Kansas	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Under 10 years	3.4	5.6	3.1	3.4	2.6	8.1	8.9	11.2	10.8	
10 - 24 years	20.9	23.8	24.1	23.4	15.2	34.9	30.3	30.1	25.6	
25 - 49 years	54.8	67.4	53.5	55.4	50.2	52.8	48.9	47.2	46.7	
50 years and Over	20.9	3.2	19.3	17.8	32.0	4.2	11.9	11.5	16.9	

¹/ The Farm Housing Survey. United States Department of Agriculture. Miscellaneous Publication No. 323. March 1939. Washington, D. C.

Type of Home Construction

Material used for building houses indicates the available building materials and the previous habits of families.

Frame houses predominated in all the represented States, for considerably more than 90 percent were of wood. The prevalence of frame houses probably reflects the previous background, inasmuch as the people who settled these Plains States came from areas where wood was the popular material for home construction.

Condition and Repair Status of Houses

The home supervisors were instructed to give their "overall impression of the general condition of the houses" in terms of good, fair, poor, or bad.

About one-half of the houses were indicated as "fair", with one-fourth listed as "good", and the remaining one-fourth as "poor" or "bad".

There seems to be little correlation between the cash expenditures for family living and the condition of the house. Families, in the group having expenditures of less than \$200 per year, were living in houses classified as "good" as well as in houses considered in "bad" condition. The families, in the group spending \$400 or more per year for family living, were living in both "good" and "bad" houses in about the same proportion. This lack of correlation between expenditure for family living and condition of the dwelling is, no doubt,

due to the fact that 84% of the FSA borrowers studied were tenants and tenants as a rule do not make major improvements. In the area 46.2 per cent of all farm operators are tenants according to the 1940 census.

Reports also included comments regarding "house being tight" in the sense that cold, rain, and insects will be kept out, and the repair condition of specific housing items were ascertained. The supervisors were asked to report "repairs or replacement needed but not urgent" if the conditions indicated that repairs were desirable but serious deterioration would not take place immediately if not provided, and to report "repairs or replacements needed badly" if they were needed at once to avoid serious deterioration. (Table 10.)

Doors and windows were reported to be the structural items most in need of repair or replacement with more than three-fifths of the households needing improvement in these features. Nearly three-fifths of all the households needed repairs of roofs and of steps according to the reports; more than one-half needed floor repairs or replacement; and in nearly one-half, either foundation or outside walls, or both, needed some repairs. Outside paint for the house was widely reported as a need.

Table 10. - Repair Condition of Specific
Housing Items of Selected Farm Security
Administration Borrowers, 1939.

Housing Items	Condition of Housing Items				
	No	Repairs or re-	Repairs or replacements		
	work	placement needed:	needed badly		
	needed	but not urgent.	Minor	Major	
	%	%	%	%	
Foundation	51.8	22.6	9.7	15.9	
Outside walls	53.5	22.7	10.7	13.1	
Roof	41.2	21.6	14.6	22.6	
Chimney	70.1	12.0	9.2	8.7	
Floors	46.3	28.8	11.1	13.8	
Doors and windows	36.0	25.7	20.5	17.8	
Screens	41.1	23.5	18.5	16.9	
Outside paint	27.3	29.1	13.3	31.3	
Steps	51.1	20.0	13.9	15.0	

Number of Rooms

The capacity of the houses is indicated in the room accommodations. It is probably a fair assumption that houses having less than 3 rooms are of doubtful adequacy. (Table 11.)

About 1 out of every 25 houses had less than 3 rooms; one-half had from 3 to 5 rooms; 2 out of 5 had from 6 to 8 rooms; and 1 out of 20 had 9 or more rooms. This means a considerable proportion of large houses, which might be taken to include all having 6 or more rooms.

Eight houses were reported as having only one room, with households varying from 2 to 8 persons living in them. The term "rural slums" is definitely in keeping with such housing conditions.

Number of Persons Per Room

The number of rooms per person or persons per room is generally recognized as a meaningful index of the housing adequacy with regard to space. A minimum of one room per person is generally considered a necessary standard.

Four-fifths of the families had houses reaching the standard of one room per person and one-fifth had less than one room per person. The data by States indicated that overcrowding, in terms of rooms per person, was highest in North Dakota and lowest in Nebraska and Kansas. These two latter States reported comparatively more of the larger houses.

668 families had 6 or more persons and 29% of these families lived in houses of 4 rooms or less. There were five families of 9 or more living in two-room houses.

Number of Bedrooms

About one-sixth of the houses had no bedrooms, or only 1 per house and the same proportion had 4 or more bedrooms per house. Two-thirds of the houses had 2 to 3 bedrooms each.

Number of Persons per Bed

An index of the adequacy of sleeping equipment is the ratio of persons per bed. One out of every 25 houses reported three or more persons per bed.

Table 11. - Housing Accomodations of Selected
Farm Security Administration Borrowers
in 1939 and of Selected Farm Households in 1934.

Housing Accomodation	Percentage Distribution									
	F.S.A. Borrowers, 1939					Selected Farm Households				
						1934 1/				
	Total:	No.	So.	Nebr.	Kans.	No.	So.	Nebr.	Kansas	
	Dak.	Dak.	Dak.			Dak.	Dak.			
Average rooms per house	5.4	4.8	5.7	5.5	5.4	5.8	6.1	6.1	5.9	
Average occupants per room	1.0	1.4	1.0	1.0	.9	.89	.75	.72	.70	
Average bedrooms per house	2.9	2.8	3.0	2.9	2.8	2.9	3.2	3.1	2.9	

1/ The Farm-Housing Survey. United States Department of Agriculture.
Miscellaneous Publication No. 323. Washington, D. C. March 1939.

HOUSE CONVENIENCES

Lighting Facilities

The kerosene lamp was the predominant type of lighting, with nearly three-fourths of the houses reporting them; one-eighth reported pressure lamps; nearly one-tenth had gas lights; and about one out of 20 had electricity. (Table 12.)

Kitchen Sink and Laundry Facilities

Kitchen drain with sink was a comparatively rare convenience-- only 1 out of every 3 of this group of Farm Security Administration borrower households reported its possession.

The borrowers covered in the study had apparently reached a fairly high level with regard to laundry equipment. Only 1 out of 5 reported washing done by hand; 1 out of 5 had a hand washer; and about three out of five had power washers.

Table 12 indicates that the farm families included in the Farm Housing Survey of 1934 enjoyed comparatively more of the conveniences of improved lighting and kitchen-sink equipment than do these FSA borrowers, but these borrowers, on an average, were better off in respect to having power washing machines, except in Nebraska.

Table 12. - Possession of Certain Household
Conveniences by Selected Farm Security
Administration Borrowers in 1939 and of
Selected Farm Households in 1934.

Household Conveniences	Percentage Distribution								
	F.S.A. Borrowers, 1939					Selected Farm Households,			
						1934 1/			
	Total	No.	So.	Nebr.	Kans.	No.	So.	Nebr.	Kans.
	Dak.	Dak.				Dak.	Dak.		
Lighting Facilities									
Electricity	5.0	6.2	6.4	4.6	3.6	10.7	17.8	21.1	18.2
Gas	9.1	13.4	11.5	8.2	5.9	3.1	3.3	3.5	5.4
Kitchen sink with drain	28.8	22.5	24.8	38.3	25.8	23.6	37.0	49.0	42.4
Power Washing Machine	57.7	70.3	69.4	50.3	49.6	41.4	50.2	56.2	38.5

1/ The Farm-Housing Survey. United States Department of Agriculture.
Miscellaneous Publication No. 323. Washington, D. C. March 1939.

Food Preservation

A place for storage of vegetables and fruits was generally reported. Only 1 out of 30 lacked such space.

Pressure cookers were comparatively scarce in the households. Only 1 out of every 7 reported having a pressure cooker.

Heating.

Stoves were the predominant source of heat, with three-fourths depending on them; one-sixth had circulating heaters; and only 1 out of every 19 had a furnace.

Water Facilities

The type of well was reported for all households. About 1 out of 4 had dug well; one-half had drilled wells; and 1 out of 6 used cisterns.

Convenience of the water supply to the house was measured in terms of the location of the well. One out of 7 had a well within the house; over one-half had a well "near the house"; 1 out of 5 reported water supply at the barn; and only 1 out of 28 had to get water from a location off the farm.

Toilet Facilities

Toilet facilities were measured in terms of possession of a "sanitary toilet"--flush, chemical, or sanitary outside toilet (such as the W.P.A. constructed). Inadequacy of this facility was evident for only one-fourth of these farm houses had a sanitary toilet. (Table 13.)

Table 13. - Possession of Certain Household Conveniences by Selected Farm Security Administration Borrowers, 1939

Household Conveniences	Total	North Dakota	South Dakota	Nebr.	Kans.
<u>Food Storage Space:</u>					
None	3.3	.4	1.6	3.3	6.0
Basement	43.8	74.3	60.0	27.9	32.5
Cave	42.6	5.5	27.2	63.0	51.5
Other	10.3	19.8	11.2	5.8	10.0
<u>Heating:</u>					
Stoves	78.6	47.3	71.4	83.8	88.4
Circulating heater	17.6	39.9	22.3	11.8	8.7
Purchase	5.6	12.8	6.3	4.4	2.9
<u>Location of well:</u>					
In house	15.1	14.5	14.1	21.9	10.1
Near house	59.4	50.2	56.7	58.0	66.6
At barn	22.1	28.0	25.4	18.2	20.3
Off farm	3.4	7.3	3.8	1.9	3.0
<u>Have Sanitary Toilet:</u>					
Yes	25.1	36.8	21.9	59.6	9.5
No	74.9	63.2	78.1	40.4	90.5

The lack of conveniences among the selected FSA borrowers indicated a generally depressed living status, in terms of these indices. The conveniences that had the highest showing were food-storage space (reported by practically all borrowers) and power washing machine (possessed by three-fifths of all borrowers). The poorest showing was in regard to the following possessions: Improved lighting (reported by one-seventh of the borrowers; water supply in house (over one-seventh); central heating, either furnace or circulating heater (one-fourth); sanitary toilet (one-fourth); and kitchen sink (possessed by only about one-third of all borrowers.)

Significant variations between individual States, in regard to these conveniences, were found. This probably indicates differing values placed on having these conveniences, as well as differing financial ability to acquire them.

CONCLUSION

Collected information indicates a definitely low level of housing of the FSA borrowers in Region VII, comprising the States of North Dakota, South Dakota, and Nebraska, and most of Kansas. This is evidenced in two ways: (1) a lower plane was found than is generally considered desirable in terms of providing for health and a decent living; and, (2) a comparatively lower plane was found than is prevalent among the general farm population of the area, as evidenced by the 1934 Farm Housing Survey.

A number of generalizations and questions arise from this survey.

1. Very little information is available about rural housing. Considerable data are available for analysis from the United States Farm Housing Survey of 1934 and from the United States Census. The lack of data on rural housing is widely recognized by people who are interested in this problem.^{4/}

2. Housing status taken together with conveniences is not uniform for these FSA borrowers in the four States. This doubtless indicates need for recognizing different cultural values placed on housing as between areas, as well as recognizing varying economic ability to obtain and maintain improved housing as between areas.

^{4/} "Housing authorities and students of the subject have either completely ignored the status of rural housing or have merely commented on the lack of data. Two reasons are apparent for this neglect. One is that rural homes are so scattered that, even though they are substandard, they do not present the appearance of the urban slums. But if all the houses in the country were put side by side, those in the rural areas would constitute the slum group. In other words, the real slums in America are buried in the countryside. Another reason for the neglect of rural housing is that there has been little effective collective action to improve rural housing as a whole, until rather recently. People know that in the country there is no lack of light and air, and neglect to consider the deplorable sanitary conditions in many regions, and the diseases that flourish as a result of soil pollution. Running water, an absolute necessity to the slum dweller in the city, is lacking to many farm dwellers whose water supply is obtained from surface wells, often contaminated. Yet no state legislature ever passed a law to establish or enforce minimum standards of sanitation in rural areas." (From Housing in Rural America, by Florence M. Swire in Rural Sociology, December 1939.)

3. The housing problem cannot be adequately attacked as an isolated factor. It is interrelated with other social and economic problems, including needs for other items of living, security of tenure, housing costs, and farm incomes. Adequate housing for low-income groups will doubtless require a dual emphasis upon reduction of housing costs and raising of incomes.

4. What are possible alternative actions relative to housing for low-income farm families: Building new houses? Improving and repairing present houses? Acceptance of the present status?

5. In view of existing housing conditions, what policies and activities are needed to better these conditions, including utilization of available labor and materials? How can housing for low-income farm families be improved if traditional methods are used? What new methods or adaptations of traditional methods are serviceable?

A P P E N D I X

POOR HOUSING CONDITIONS FOUND AMONG THE LOW INCOME FARM FAMILIES APPLYING TO FSA FOR ASSISTANCE, AND SOME OF THE HOUSING ACTIVITIES OF FSA IN REGION VII.

The Farm Security Administration Home Management Supervisors who obtained the schedule information for the Region VII study of RURAL HOUSING FACILITIES OF SELECTED FARM SECURITY ADMINISTRATION BORROWERS were asked to make narrative reports on a few selected cases. The cases reported are not typical of the area, but they do indicate that very bad housing conditions exist on some of the farms of the Great Plains. The reports also show that drouth, grasshoppers, and the low farm incomes of the last few years have been reflected in unfinished houses, and a great lack of house repairs and paint.

There are many dwellings, occupied by Farm Security Administration applicants, in such poor condition that they can not possibly be repaired but should be replaced by new houses. The present Farm Security Administration program does not provide a means of constructing new houses for the standard rehabilitation borrowers. The improvements that can be made are in most cases minor and while they may better living conditions to some extent, they are not the answer to the poor housing problem.

EXCERPTS FROM NARRATIVE REPORTS

"The housing and living conditions of this family are deplorable. The house is of rock structure, approximately one hundred years old and is in very poor condition. The house is very damp and dark, having few windows. One small room is used as a kitchen and the other room as a bed-living room. It has two beds in it. There are no closets or storage space. Household furniture is meager and in poor repair. Rags and old garments are used in several windows where the glass is out. There is a small cellar under the house but vegetables stored in it soon spoil."

"The water supply is furnished by two wells and a cistern. However, all have failed because of the long drought and the family has been hauling water."

"The house in which the family lives is built of sod and is in very bad condition. There are holes and cracks in many places. The windows and doors fit poorly and the house was filled with flies at the time of the interview. The farm is so located that the children can attend only a small portion of the regular school term. A new house is the only solution to the housing problem of this family."

"The place on which this family lives is a sandhill ranch with very little farm land and poor improvements. The house is sod, with no floor except packed earth which is worn out in places, making the floor very uneven. It is impossible to keep the house clean because the sod dusts off and mice shake dirt down from the ceiling."

"When one family of ten made application for a loan, they were living in a one-room log house which had only a dirt floor. The homemaker had apparently lost all interest in life and any hope that there could be any improvement in her lot. In the mud and log house the range, which is the only thing left to show for the expenditure of this client's bonus money, set in the middle of the room. At one end of the room was a double bed, a dresser, and a sanitary cot. The mother, father, and three-month old baby slept in the bed and the three girls (eleven, four, and three years) slept on the cot. In a sod shack a short distance from the house was a double bed and baby's crib. The fifteen, thirteen, and six year old boys slept in the bed and the nine year old boy slept in the crib. The table was not large enough for the family. There were two straight chairs and one bench. The bench was long enough for four to sit on, so the rest of the family either stood while they ate or waited until the first four had eaten. They probably stood."

"The family was found to be living in a basement of a building which had been built for housing chickens. It consisted of two rooms. There are ten persons in the family. Mr. S. bought this piece of land ten years ago. He hoped to build a house for his growing family. His funds were exhausted before the house was built; the barns and other buildings were built first. He was unable to pay his taxes and the place now belongs to the State."

"This family started to build a two story, four-room house but it has never been completed because of lack of funds. Two sides of the house have never been sided. One room has been rough finished and that is all. The family lives in this one room in winter. Rough floors have been laid. They planned to lay another floor over it but it has never been done. They seem to be just "camping" and principles of cleanliness and order have apparently been forgotten."

HOUSING ACTIVITIES OF FARM SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

Increased and more stable farm income brought about through the Rural Rehabilitation program of the Farm Security Administration is contributing indirectly to better rural housing, but the Farm Security Administration is also using more direct methods for improving the housing conditions in rural areas.

By the end of 1940, 217 farm families in Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota were living in new or reconditioned houses on Resettlement Projects and Infiltration Farms. 639 Tenant Purchase borrowers in 80 counties throughout the area were living in houses which met approved standards for space, convenience, comfort, and health. 64 of these Tenant Purchase borrowers have built new houses; 570 have made major repairs and improvements at an average cost of \$408.

Tenant Purchase houses are demonstration houses in the communities and an attempt is being made to have them all, whether new houses or old repaired houses, meet the minimum standards for space, convenience, comfort, and health.

Minimum standards set up for housing by the Tenant Purchase program provide that:

1. Windows and doors shall be in good repair and properly screened.
2. Sanitary toilets designed to meet the acceptable standards of the State Health Department shall be provided.

3. Water supply shall be adequate and safe.
4. Foundations must be adequate.
5. Roofs must be water tight and exterior walls protected by paint or other wood preservative.
6. Chimneys must be in such repair that they do not constitute fire hazards.
7. Sleeping quarters should be adequate to meet family needs (Usually a minimum of three bed rooms)
8. There should be adequate provision for storing food, clothing, utensils, tools, produce, etc.
9. There should be a sink in the kitchen with a drain if possible.
10. There should be hand rails on the stairs.

Under the standard RR loan program, the RR and HM Supervisors are helping families secure terms in their rental contracts which provided for improvements in housing facilities and families are encouraged to use loan and grant funds where necessary to make minor repairs.

Lack of appreciation of good housing, lack of interest, and lack of skill are not easily overcome, but some progress is being made along this line as revealed by the County reports:

"In homes where there is a lack of room, it has been difficult to make much of an improvement but in one particular case we talked to the county officials, who promised to move an additional building so that two more rooms could be added to a small three-room house for a family of nine. In another home where this was not possible, the rearranging of furnishings and the installing of a few hooks and shelves gave a more liveable home. In another home it was suggested that the bedroom be changed where the kitchen now is and the living room where the bedroom is. This will be more satisfactory because of allowing separate sleeping rooms for the parents and children. Innumerable families have done some cleaning and painting thus making their homes more liveable. In one home we processed a loan to pay for needed home improvements."

1. Road must be water-tight and exterior walls finished

by paint or other wood preservative.

2. Owners must be in such repair that they do not constitute fire

3. The structure should be adequate to meet family needs.

(See in a chapter of the book)

4. There should be adequate provision for heating, lighting,

5. There should be a bath in the kitchen with a toilet if possible.

6. There should be some place for storage.

7. The structure should be built on a firm foundation and

be strong enough to stand in case of fire or other disaster.

8. The structure should be built in such a way that it can be

used for other purposes if necessary.

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"We have assisted several families in obtaining aid from the landlord in the way of released cash rent in order that they could put their homes in a more liveable condition. These repairs and improvements have been screens, paint, paper, and minor repairs such as steps and roof repairs. In one case the RR supervisor and the Home Management supervisor were instrumental in obtaining aid from the county as well as the landlord so that this one particular family was able to make some major repairs on their home as well as minor ones."

"We went to one home and found it to be in almost too poor a condition to live in. The plaster, in the rooms where the walls had been plastered, had fallen off in chunks; panes were out of the windows; the floors were rough and poorly fitted; doors sagged; the porch and steps were about to collapse. The family was having a difficult time securing food and clothing and had no money to allow for plaster, bricks, paper, filler, windows, lumber, and nails. We estimated the cost of these materials to be about \$15. There were three children working. Could each donate \$5? Thinking this over the parents decided they could and a neighbor who does carpenter work would donate his services and replaster the walls and repair the chimney. Since then no visit has been made but the family brought in their record book to be checked and in it were recorded income from the children and expenses for items such as paper, plaster, lumber, etc. All we did here was to suggest the ways and means but it helped."

The Farm Security Administration recognizes that housing is one of the greatest factors affecting the morale of the people, and that if disadvantaged farm families are to be rehabilitated, something must be done to improve housing conditions. Poor rural housing is not due to one cause nor can it be improved by one method. The Farm Security Administration is giving the problem consideration in all phases of its rehabilitation program and is trying to develop new methods for dealing with the problem.

In instances where needed repairs would amount to more than 30% of the replacement value of the house, it is usually recommended that the house be replaced rather than repaired. If this recommendation were

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In instances where needed repairs would amount to more than 50% of the replacement value of the house, it is usually recommended that the house be replaced rather than repaired. If this recommendation were

followed in Region VII, it would result in an extensive construction program. Ways and means would have to be found for developing "self-help" plans among the farm families and for reducing costs of materials. Rammed earth, sod, and adobe construction may be adaptable in this area where wood and stone are scarce, and would provide opportunities for greater use of family labor. There may be other ways of reducing building costs which have not yet been developed.

